

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A22THE WILMINGTON EVENING JOURNAL  
25 April 1980

# Once again, a warning

**W**HEN THE CHIEF OF the Central Intelligence Agency forecasts a vicious turn to the world's petroleum situation, we should consider the warning seriously. The global oil picture is grim enough already, thank you.

CIA director Stansfield Turner told senators at a hearing on Tuesday that the Soviet Union will be transformed from net exporter to net importer of oil within about a year. That was the nub of Adm. Turner's testimony and it is enough to justify his posing what he called the cardinal issue of "how vicious the struggle for energy supplies will become."

Two dramatic events this week demonstrate how grim that struggle already is.

One was how, denied Iranian oil except at \$35 a barrel, Japanese tankers headed to sea in search of other suppliers. Another was how Turkey, which many observers have long believed to be at the geographic center of global strategic considerations, appears to reject such sanctions against Iran as proposed by President Carter. The New York Times service reported that senior officials in Ankara said the first consideration in determining Turkey's attitude toward Tehran was oil.

As the output of the Soviets' own oil fields declines, and the Mideast exporters for one reason or another decrease the exploitation of their fields, Adm. Turner told the Senate Energy Committee, there will be "another potentially destabilizing ingredient" in the Mideast situation. Economic disruption will be averted, he said, only if the United States and other importers exercise "stringent policies" of conservation.

These papers have pleaded and argued for years — often in the face of ridicule from those who denied the existence of serious problems —

in behalf of conservation as a major tool in resolving our energy dilemma. It is at least slightly encouraging that despite an apparent temporary abundance of oil — including gasoline inventories at an all-time high in March — soaring prices for the commodity have imposed one form of conservation.

Last week, as the example, the Highway Users Federation released results of a Gallup poll which indicated that gasoline price increases in the past year have changed the driving habits of 87 percent of all car owners.

The figures show a considerable adjustment. Seven out of ten motorists report driving less now than they did a year ago, mostly by reducing weekend and social driving. Twelve percent of those surveyed said they have cut out vacation driving altogether. Of those who drove alone to work a year ago, one out of five said someone in their families has stopped solo auto commuting, and of this group three out of four are pooling rides and about one out of six has switched to public transportation.

Nothing in that report implies a final solution to the energy problem. If everybody who could carpool did carpool, it still wouldn't be a complete answer; if everyone who could use public facilities were willing to do so, the transit system couldn't handle the job.

But at least partial answers are developing and they had better develop more quickly. Adm. Turner warns that an oil importing USSR will have to make "extremely painful" economic, military and political choices to avoid a sharp economic decline. Those wouldn't necessarily be painful only to the Soviets. They could involve a certain amount of pain, or at the least discomfort, for us. For that reason, it becomes even more urgent that we reduce our dependence on Mideast oil.